

West Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council

Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 15, 2009

North Central High School Cafeteria

W3795 US2-41, (Powers) Spalding

6:30-8:30 p.m. EST

WUP CAC Members Present:

Donald Britton

Marcy Cella

Floyd Dropps

Pete Jandro

Lorana Jinkerson

David Johnson

Martin Johnson

George Lindquist

Rory Mattson

G. Dale McNamee

Chauncey Moran

James Schmierer

Robert "Skip" Schulz

Dennis Stachewicz, Jr.

Warren Suchovsky

Philip Wirtanen

WUP CAC Members Absent:

Shawn Hagan

Fred "Mick" Jarvi

Marvin Roberson

Department of Natural Resources Staff Present:

Stacy Welling, Upper Peninsula (UP) Field Deputy, Marquette

Russ Mason, Chief, Wildlife Division, Lansing

Craig Albright, Wildlife Division, Escanaba

Debbie Begalle, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Escanaba

Mike Herman, Fisheries, Escanaba

Rich Hill, Parks and Recreation, Marquette

Jessica Mistak, Fisheries, Marquette

Sgt. Pete Wright, Law Enforcement Division, Marquette

Penny Bacon, Executive Division, Marquette

The West Upper Peninsula (WUP) Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Warren Suchovsky.

Adoption of the Agenda: Chauncey Moran has an update from the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting. Warren added Chauncey's topic to the council members closing topics. Marcy Cella has an update on the public access site on the Huron River. Motion was made by Marcy Cella to adopt the agenda as amended. Don Britton supported the motion. Motion passed.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: George Lindquist requested a change **from:** George Lindquist proposed a single buck license **to** George Lindquist clarified the proposed changes to the single buck license. Marcy Cella made a motion to approve the minutes with the change from George Lindquist. Motion supported and passed.

Separate Item of Business:

Charles Westerberg, Vice President, Bay de Noc Great Lakes Sportsfishermen, said their group doesn't support the removal of the slot limit at this time. They don't support planting brown trout in the Ford and Cedar Rivers at this time. They are working with Mike Herman on alternate planting sites. They will support the discontinuation of the splake plants **only** when the brown trout are available.

Marty Johnson made a motion to accept the amendment. Dale McNamee supported the motion. Warren requested a clarification on the motion. Rory Mattson said the motion is to change the action to include supporting the discontinuation of the splake plants **only** if the brown trout is available to plant in place of the splake. Motion passed. Warren said a letter would be sent to Fish Division reflecting this action change.

Public Comments:

Ellen Moilanen shared her concerns and potential danger with dogs getting caught in conibear traps.

Charles Westerberg would like the CAC to look at cormorant control.

Russ Mason, Chief of Wildlife Division said cormorants are protected under the federal migratory bird treaty act. Michigan kills more cormorants than any other state in the Mississippi flyway, by about two times. We are trying to get an amendment to the National Environmental Policy Act to get that number increased.

Alan Ettenhofer, UP Whitetails would like the CAC to support the continuation of supplemental feeding of deer. The current supplemental feeding rules expire at the end of 2009.

Reports:

Marcy Cella provided an update on the mouth of the Huron River. Marcy and Rich Hill, Parks and Recreation will meet this spring/summer along with FMFM to survey the mouth of the Huron River. Marcy said they are looking at a Type II access site which doesn't necessarily mean a developed concrete boat launch but does provide a toilet.

Stacy Welling, UP Field Deputy thanked North Central Schools for the use of their facilities for the CAC meeting. Stacy introduced Russ Mason, Chief of Wildlife Division. Stacy reported at the EUP-CAC meeting on Monday, they discussed the 2008 deer season, feeding and baiting in the UP, and the Lake Superior watershed partnership program. At their February meeting they will discuss wind energy and carbon credits. The EUP-CAC would like to have a joint meeting, perhaps in March. Stacy will check with Sharon Schafer to see if she can attend to provide a budget overview to both Councils. The EUP-CAC suggested meeting March 19 at a central location, possibly in Marquette.

Marcy Cella thanked Stacy for the refreshments. Marcy suggested to the members that when the meeting is held in your area that person should provide the refreshments. No action was taken.

Staff Updates:

Rich Hill, Parks and Recreation, said park employees are working on routine maintenance. With the all of the snow, some parks like the Porcupine Mountains had a decent Christmas season by being able to open their ski hill. Cross country ski trails are opened and groomed at state parks. The park reservation system can accept reservations six months in advance and currently accepting reservations for July 2009. So far, camper reservations are down 8% for 2009. The public access site is being cleared at Bergland. State parks will be hosting events to pull in non-traditional users. Also, June 20, 2009 marks the 90th anniversary of state parks. Each park will be hosting a special event on that day.

Debbie Begalle, FMFM, said the Hermansville to Escanaba grade is owned by MDOT but has an agreement with the DNR to manage the grade as a recreational trail. We will be holding public meetings hopefully in April or May to provide information and for the public to provide comments on the use of the grade. Debbie is a member of the Michigan Deer Advisory team. Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) has partnered with the DNR to develop a strategic deer plan. They will be hosting meetings throughout the state, two of the meetings will be held in the UP, locations to be determined. They are looking for groups that want to be involved; contacts are Amy Spray, MUCC or Kelly Carter, DNR.

Russ Mason, Chief, Wildlife Division, said the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is attempting to delist wolves. The USFWS will publish a new wolf delisting rule on January 27 and it will become effective 30 days after, so on or about February 27. If the delisting is approved, we will be instantly ready to go at the end of February. Russ supports opening coyote season during the rifle deer season in the Lower Peninsula but not in the UP. In March, we will be introducing a Pure Michigan hunt lottery. The lottery will cost \$4 per chance for an unlimited amount of chances. Russ said three winners will be drawn and allowed to hunt bear, elk, anything you would have to but a tag for. With legislative changes, we hope to expand the program to include any game species, fish all species, park passes, and also to allow non-residents to hunt elk.

Mike Herman, Fisheries reported that Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) hasn't been found in the UP. We will reinstate taking brood stock from rearing ponds for walleye planting this year. The Director approved the 5 bag limit on salmon, which becomes effective April 1, 2009.

New Business: Deer Season 2008–Observations and Perceptions from the Council

- Definition of success is different for different people. For some it's venison and camaraderie
- License change was negative, concern limited hunting for youth
- Confusion with combo license and new regulations. Saw bigger deer being bagged with different license
- Need to realign deer management units (DMU's)
- Request for concrete information of current status of UP deer herd
- Need to discuss impact of baiting

- Need to clarify licensing process with management objectives – simplify licenses
- Approve of DNR deer planning initiative
- Believe numbers are down, concern about 2009/10
- Numbers down, although still successful
- Deer crop damage is significant concern to agriculture community
- Fewer deer related to habitat loss and habitat management
- DMU 021 encompasses diverse habitat and should be split
- September youth hunt should be moved closer to regular season
- Concern with combo license and single tags
- Habitat is the priority, lack of 2 ½ year old deer, fewer deer, crossbow concerns, supplemental feeding needs to be extended
- Herd out of whack, license should be doe first, then buck, why only shoot big bucks, support crossbow for does only, extend logging
- Saw younger deer, few bucks
- Need to educate the public on licenses.

Survey Results: – Craig Albright

Craig Albright provided results from the WUP 2008 deer camp survey. The 2008 deer herd was average in size comparing the deer pellet indexes for the past 50 years. In 2008, 369 camps, which included over 1,700 hunters, participated in the camp survey.

- 30% shot a buck (Average is 29%)
- 8% shot an antlerless deer in the firearm deer season
- 3.2 deer were observed per hunter day (Average is 2.4)
- 47 fawns observed per 100 does (Average is 54)
- Deer trend is fewer deer
- Deer season was rated average
- Coyote and wolf numbers up; bobcat numbers down

Additional comments provided by hunters:

- Protection of bucks
- Predator impacts
- Antlerless harvest
- Baiting and feeding
- Reduce deer harvest

Ages of bucks killed in the UP and examined at deer check stations:

1.5 year old bucks	2.5 year old bucks
2007=45%	2007=32%
2008=36%	2008=42%

In Summary:

- Deer herd in 2008 was smaller than 2007.
- Despite smaller herd, hunters had reasonable deer sighting and kill success.
- Camps identified a number of issues they would like us to look into
- The size of the deer herd in fall 2009 will be strongly influenced by snow and temperature during the remainder of this winter.

Jessica Mistak noted hunters can also participate in an on-line survey.

Crossbows:

Rory Mattson reported at the January NRC meeting the Crossbow Committee provided the NRC with three recommendations. These recommendations will be up for

discussion at the February NRC meeting and as an action item at the March NRC meeting. The following recommendations may be amended:

- Allow crossbows during any hunting season in which a fireman may be legally used.
- Allow crossbows to be used from December 1 to January 1 in the shotgun zone.
- Allow anyone 65 or older to use crossbows during any deer season.

Dale McNamee said the Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance supports lowering the age to 50 and older, in the UP during the early archery season. Archery hunter numbers drop off at age 50. They support the crossbow season in the shotgun zone. Discussion ensued on crossbows; including a separate season, age of the hunter, and potential effect on the deer population.

Dale McNamee asked the CAC to support allowing the use of crossbows for hunters over the age of 50, in the UP, from October 1 – November 14 in the UP. Motion supported. Motion passed with eleven yes votes, three opposed, one abstained.

Chauncey Moran made note of the by-laws... **Those COUNCIL members who vote in opposition can provide concerns/issues to accompany their decision.**

Warren asked those Council members that opposed to provide Penny Bacon with a brief sentence or two to incorporate into the minutes.

Opposed:

Floyd Dropps:

Skip Schulz: Due to the lack of knowledge on the subject, I trust those on the WUP-CAC and those in the DNR to make a better and informed decision.

Phil Wirtanen: The Lower Peninsula test will reflect adequate impact results of crossbow use. The UP herd may be too vulnerable after this winter to allow this additional pressure.

George Lindquist abstained.

Important Deer Issues the CAC could address over the year:

- Clarification of licenses
- Baiting
- Supplemental Feeding
- Increased coordination with the DNR – forming a CAC subcommittees
- Deer Range Improvement Program, habitat (winter), habitat management
- Move youth hunt to October
- Doe to buck ratio

Next Meeting:

Rory Mattson made a motion to meet on Monday, February 23, 2009 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. EST in Crystal Falls. Skip Schulz supported the motion. Motion passed. The meeting location will be determined, possibly at the Crystal Falls Township Hall.

They Council agreed to a joint meeting with the EUP-CAC on the 3rd Thursday in March, in Marquette.

Marcy Cella made a motion to adjourn the meeting. George Lindquist supported the motion. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.